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strong probability that the Todas are an intrusive tribe which probably came into the Nilgari hills from the district of Malabar, on the west coast, though certain arguments may be adduced in favor of Mysore or Coorg. Secondly, he is of opinion that they represent a decline in culture and religion rather than anything approaching a primitive status or an arrested development. The Todas would present a most remarkable object lesson in evolution if, as Mr Rivers suggests, they should, under European influence, now evolve from polyandry through group marriage into monogamy.

JOHN R. SWANTON.

At the Back of the Black Man's Mind. Or Notes on the Kingly Office in West Africa. By R. E. DENNETT. London: Macmillan & Co.; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1906. 8°, 288 pp.

It is rather curious that in an age so dominated by evolutionary ideas two authors dealing with races in very different parts of the world and under very different conditions should believe that their present social status is a result of degeneration. The above work, very different in scope and object from that of Mr Rivers, above reviewed, deals with the religious beliefs and social customs of the Bavili and Bini tribes of West Africa, but particularly with that higher philosophy which Mr Dennett holds to lie behind it. The book consists largely of reprints of several articles by the same writer in the journals of the African Society, the Anthropological Institute, and the Folk-lore Society, and it is perhaps owing to this fact that they present a certain lack of coherence and leave considerable to be inferred by a reader not already acquainted with the subject or one who does not read with close attention. For the same reason it is difficult to give a proper idea of the philosophy here presented, yet it is too interesting to pass over without making the effort.

Most writers on West Africa have assumed the religion there found to consist of what is called fetishism or *ndongoism*, involving the use of small images supposed to be connected with spirits. These fetishes are divided into two classes: "Zinkici Zinzo or Zinkondi (home protecting figures, charms, and talismans) and Zinkici Zimbowu (figures into which nails are driven)." Mr Dennett gives a very interesting account of them, but he denies that they represent all the religion the two peoples he has investigated possess. "I believe," says he, "that above and beyond fetishism or Ndongoism . . . there is a higher form of religion among the Bavili which is connected with certain symbols in the form of (1) sacred groves; (2) sacred lands and rivers; (3) sacred trees; (4) sacred animals; (5) omens; and (6) the seasons." In its last analysis Bavili

philosophy is monistic, resolving itself into Nzambi. Nzambi, we are told, means "the personal essence (Impi) of the fours (Zia or Za fours)," and the fours "are the groups each of four powers called Bakici Baci . . . The prefix Ba the plural of N proving that these powers are personalities or attributes of a person, that they are not zinkici like the mere wooden figures." The fours as they exist in mundane things appear to arise from the abstract elements of a trinity of male, female, and evolutionary power proceeding from Nzambi. The third of these continues to operate in the world under a slightly altered form, making the fourth abstract power. From a similar combination of male and female elements and their products the second sacred number, six, arises, and in accordance with these two numbers are arranged the six classes above mentioned. Thus there are six primary groups of sacred groves of four each, and although there are many other sacred groves, it is supposed that these originally totalled 144, i. e., 6 times 24. There are also six sacred provinces surrounding the royal province, and the Kuilu, the principal river of the kingdom of Loango, is made to fall into the scheme by using the names of its three tributaries, that of a lake at its head, and an additional name borne by the river in its upper course. Again, there are 24 sacred trees and plants, 24 sacred animals, and 24 omens. Finally, seasons "only exist as factors in six groups of four," each four corresponding to the great abstract four arising from Nzambi, while the groups are of two months each. The whole sequence of months, however, itself represents a process of growth in a living organism, and there is a thirteenth month which stands at one end as the primal cause, and at the other as the ultimate effect and the cause of a new series. For it should be noted that all of the six categories above enumerated proceed in this manner from a primal cause lying outside through an evolution by means of the sexes to a consummation which becomes the cause of a new series.

Bavili property owners receive their right to land from the provincial governors, and these in turn from the king, who himself has no power over it except as the representative of Nzambi on earth. In the last analysis, therefore, it is the deity who owns all Bavili land.

Next Mr Dennett reviews the customs and social organization of the Bini, wherein he thinks he has found traces of the same beliefs, though his case here is naturally not so strong.

Beyond the central thought of this book, of which the reviewer has tried to give an idea, though he is aware an imperfect one, there are very interesting chapters on the constitution of the Bavili and Bini governments, laws, measures, signs and symbols, and the Bavili psychology.

In this material may be noted as of especial interest references to the drum language of West Africa. Regarding the rapidity in which news can be communicated in this manner, Mr Dennett says:

"In 1881, we in Landana heard of the wreck of the mail steamer *Ethiopia* off Luango, sixty or seventy miles away, one or two hours after its actual occurrence, in Luango, by drum message. . . .

"In the early part of 1895 I sent the schooner *Olhanensa* from Luango to a place some sixty miles north, called Konkwati, for the purpose of picking up some cargo there. One morning about ten o'clock my head man came to me, and after some hesitation told me that he had heard that the schooner was ashore. I could get nothing more definite out of him except that he had heard the 'news.' I knew enough about the rapidity with which bad news travels to believe that this misfortune must have occurred, and set about making the necessary preparations for despatching boats and implements to her rescue, so that the next day, when the messenger confirming the news arrived, all was ready and immediately forwarded. It appeared that the schooner had come ashore during the night previous to the arrival of the unofficial news, which probably had not been communicated to me until some time after it was the common property of the natives; that is to say, the news had traveled the sixty miles or so in three or four hours."

JOHN R. SWANTON.

Proceedings and Collections of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society for the year 1905. Edited by REV. HORACE EDWIN HAYDEN, M.A., Corresponding Secretary and Librarian. Volume IX. Wilkes-Barré, Pa.: Printed for the Society, 1905. 8°, 249 pp., ills.

Were it not for the fact that the excellent work which the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society is doing is so well known, its name would hardly suggest the extent of its interest in American ethnology and archeology. Such interest is exemplified by the volume before us, for of the eight main papers which it contains, six are devoted to topics of anthropologic interest, as follows:

1. Pioneer Physicians of Wyoming Valley, 1771-1825, by Frederick C. Johnson, M.D. (pp. 47-106).
2. Early Smoking Pipes of the North American Aborigines, by Alfred Franklin Berlin (pp. 107-136).
3. Aboriginal Pottery of the Wyoming Valley-Susquehanna River Region, Pennsylvania, by Christopher Wren (pp. 137-170).
4. Roman Catholic Indian Relics in the Possession of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, by Charles F. Hill (pp. 171-174).